

LEVEL OF NEED STUDY FOR TRANSIT SERVICES IN MECOSTA AND OSCEOLA COUNTIES

AUGUST 2006

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- Mr. Roger Faber Osceola County
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- Mr. John Drury, Michigan Department of Transportation
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- Dave Bee, West Michigan Regional Planning Commission

Introduction

The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funded the development of a study to determine the level of need for transit services in Mecosta and Osceola counties. The West Michigan Regional Planning Commission (WMRPC/Region 8) performed many of the tasks and administered the grant funds. The study provides a community-by-community breakdown of demographics in the two counties, 32 townships, three cities, and eight villages. Additionally, a survey was distributed to 3,500 of the 24,000 households in the study area. The WMRPC also facilitated committee meetings to hear issues and concerns of the study area.

Planning Process

Action 1 – Introduction

The WMRPC established a nine-person committee (The Transit Committee) to develop the survey tool, review information, and approve the final study. The Transit Committee is comprised of the Director of the WMRPC, two officials from MDOT, two officials from Mecosta County, two officials from Osceola County, and two officials from transit services (Mecosta Osceola Transit Authority). The WMRPC provided each organization an opportunity to comment on the work program. A survey of stakeholders was added during this action.

Action 2 – Community Description

The WMRPC developed a community description that includes demographic information that details the population of each community within the study area. The 2000 Census is the primary source of detailed information such as age/sex distribution, household distribution, commuting patterns, employment distribution, physical limitations, income levels, and other information that describes the area's population. A brief description of the area's physical resources is also included that focuses on the area's transportation system (roads) and major trip generators (government centers, schools, retail areas, etc.). The Transit Committee reviewed this information for accuracy.

Action 3 – Area-wide Survey

The WMRPC developed a draft survey tool to present to the Transit Committee. The Committee approved the final survey tool that covered topics such as:

- Use of existing services
- Types of services resident would likely utilize
- Frequency of need for transit services
- Preferred destinations
- Preferred hours of service
- Knowledge of existing services

- Reasons for use (employment, shopping, school, doctor, etc.)
- Funding preferences
- Demographics (to insure equal representation of groups and geographic areas)

After the survey tool was approved by the Transit Committee the WMRPC ran copies of the survey for distribution. According to the 2000 Census, there were 23,761 households in the two-county area. The WMRPC used an independent mailing service to select the households and mail the surveys. The WMRPC also provided a press release to newspapers and radio stations across the area in order to spread the word that a survey was being performed.

The surveys were returned to MOTA. No return postage was provided. If people wished to drop the surveys off, they were given that option and provided several locations throughout the area.

The WMRPC compiled and tabulated the surveys using a survey program (Snap) that allowed for tabulation, cross tabulations, and other tools to allow the Transit Committee to interpret the information.

The WMRPC provided a written analysis of the tabulated information for the Transit Committee to review.

MOTA also distributed 250 surveys to regular users of the transit system. The WMRPC tabulated these surveys separately from the randomly mailed surveys.

The WMRPC also mailed a separate survey to 30 stakeholders across the two-county area (identified by the Transit Committee) and reported on the returned information.

Action 4 – Review of Information

The WMRPC compiled all of the information gathered for the study and provided broad conclusions based on the information for review and comments of the Transit Committee. The Committee had a set amount of time to provide comments in order to allow for the completion of the study.

Action 5 – Finalize Planning Process

The WMRPC printed 50 copies of the completed study for distribution to the two counties, MDOT, and the transit agencies.

Community Description

Demographic Trends

A general description of the people that live in Mecosta and Osceola counties is important for determining the level of need for transit services. Currently, the most detailed information available is from the U.S. Census and the most current year for detailed information is 2000. While this information is six years old, it provides a detailed community portrait.

Population Trends

Between 1980 and 2005 Michigan's population increased by 9.3 percent to reach 10,120,860 people (Table 1). During the same period Mecosta County's population increased by 14.7 percent – increasing from 36,961 people in 1980 to 42,391 people in 2005. Osceola County's population increased almost as much (numerically) as its much larger neighbor, meaning its percentage increase was more dramatic. Osceola County's population increased from 18,928 in 1980 to 23,750 in 2005, which is an increase of 25.5 percent.

The most obvious trend that influences the ability to provide transit services is the continued disbursement of the population into the townships, while the population growth of cities and villages remains flat or decreases. This trend makes it more difficult to efficiently serve the area's transit needs.

In Mecosta County the City of Big Rapids' population decreased by 3,021 people during the 25-year period – a loss of 21 percent of the City's population. The County's four village's populations remained fairly constant. All of the County's growth occurred in the townships. Morton Township's population increased from 1,361 people to 3,300 people – an increase of 1,939 people, or a 142.5 percent increase. Big Rapids Township followed (numerically) with an increase of 925 people. Three other townships had population increases of at least 50 percent: Deerfield had an 80.4 percent increase, Aetna had a 74.5 percent increase, and Austin had a 64.7 percent increase. There were no townships that lost population.

In Osceola County, Reed City bucked the trend of cities and posted a 12 percent increase in population – increasing from 2,221 in 1980 to 2,488 in 2005. Evart's population decreased by 166 people during the 25-year period – a loss of 8.5 percent of the City's population. The County's four village's populations remained fairly constant. Like Mecosta, most of the County's growth occurred in the townships. Six townships had population increases of at least 50 percent: Cedar had a 77 percent increase, Hersey had a 74.2 percent increase, LeRoy had a 61.6 percent increase, Sylvan had a 61 percent increase, Hartwick had a 53.3 percent increase, and Evart had a 50.5 percent increase. Numerically, Hersey Township had the largest increase (642), followed by Evart Township (520) and Lincoln (495). There were no townships that lost population.

Table 1: Population Trends

Location	Population				Change	
	1980	1990	2000	2005 (est.)	#	%
Michigan	9,262,078	9,295,277	9,938,444	10,120,860	858,782	9.3
Mecosta County	36,961	37,317	40,553	42,391	5,430	14.7
Cities						
Big Rapids	14,361	12,603	10,849	11,340	(3,021)	(21.0)
Villages						
Barryton	422	393	381	398	(24)	(5.7)
Mecosta	428	393	440	460	32	7.5
Morley	507	528	495	517	10	2.0
Stanwood	209	179	204	213	4	2.0
Townships (excludes city and village populations)						
Aetna	1,039	1,294	1,734	1,813	774	74.5
Austin	898	1,100	1,415	1,479	581	64.7
Big Rapids	2,471	3,100	3,249	3,396	925	37.4
Chippewa	1,009	1,035	1,239	1,295	286	28.3
Colfax	1,885	1,915	1,975	2,065	180	9.5
Deerfield	837	1,031	1,445	1,510	673	80.4
Fork	926	1,002	1,297	1,356	430	46.4
Grant	642	644	680	711	69	10.7
Green	2,847	2,833	3,209	3,354	507	17.8
Hinton	855	995	1,035	1,082	227	26.5
Martiny	1,210	1,348	1,606	1,679	469	38.8
Mecosta	1,676	1,789	2,231	2,332	656	39.1
Millbrook	947	1,021	1,081	1,130	183	19.3
Morton	1,361	1,729	3,157	3,300	1,939	142.5
Sheridan	1,007	1,020	1,357	1,419	412	40.9
Wheatland	1,424	1,365	1,474	1,541	117	8.2
Osceola County	18,928	20,146	23,197	23,750	4,822	25.5
Cities						
Evart City	1,945	1,744	1,738	1,779	(166)	(8.5)
Reed City (City)	2,221	2,379	2,430	2,488	267	12.0
Villages						
Hersey Village	364	409	374	383	19	5.2
LeRoy Village	293	257	267	273	(20)	(6.8)
Marion Village	816	801	836	856	40	4.9
Tustin Village	264	230	237	243	(21)	(8.0)
Townships (excludes city and village populations)						
Burdell	803	917	1,004	1,028	225	28.0
Cedar	235	298	406	416	181	77.0
Evart	1,029	1,229	1,513	1,549	520	50.5
Hartwick	420	504	629	644	224	53.3
Hersey	865	1,046	1,472	1,507	642	74.2
Highland	1,063	1,018	1,207	1,236	173	16.3
LeRoy	565	706	892	913	348	61.6
Lincoln	1,173	1,228	1,629	1,668	495	42.2
Marion	675	644	744	762	87	12.9
Middle Branch	642	695	858	878	236	36.8
Orient	635	686	803	822	187	29.4
Osceola	920	889	1,118	1,145	225	24.5
Richmond	1,649	1,722	1,695	1,735	86	5.2
Rose Lake	847	937	1,231	1,260	413	48.8
Sherman	847	949	1,081	1,106	259	30.6
Sylvan	657	858	1,033	1,058	401	61.0

Source: U.S. Census, WMRPC

AGE DISTRIBUTION

MECOSTA COUNTY'S AGE DISTRIBUTION (TABLE 2) DIFFERS FROM MICHIGAN'S DISTRIBUTION SINCE THE COUNTY'S MEDIAN AGE OF 31.9 IS LOWER THAN MICHIGAN'S MEDIAN AGE OF 35.5. THE COUNTY HAS THREE AGE GROUPS THAT ARE GREATER THAN MICHIGAN'S DISTRIBUTION. THE 18-24 AGE GROUP ACCOUNTS FOR 19.8 PERCENT OF THE COUNTY'S POPULATION AND IS HIGH DUE TO THE PRESENCE OF FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY. ADDITIONALLY, THE AGE GROUPS BETWEEN 55 AND 84 ARE LARGER DUE TO THE LARGE AMOUNT OF RETIREMENT-ORIENTED COMMUNITIES. THE DISTRIBUTION OF MALES AND FEMALES IN MECOSTA COUNTY IS UNIQUE SINCE THERE ARE SLIGHTLY MORE MALES THAN FEMALES.

OSCEOLA COUNTY'S AGE DISTRIBUTION IS DIFFERENT THAN MICHIGAN'S SINCE THE COUNTY'S MEDIAN AGE OF 37.6 IS HIGHER THAN MICHIGAN'S MEDIAN AGE. THE COUNTY'S AGE GROUPS THAT FALL OUTSIDE OF MICHIGAN'S INCLUDE THE UNDER 5 GROUP, WHICH IS LOWER; THE 5-17 GROUP, WHICH IS HIGHER; THE 18-44 GROUPS, WHICH ARE LOWER; AND THE 55-84 GROUPS, WHICH ARE HIGHER. THE DISTRIBUTION OF MALES AND FEMALES IN OSCEOLA COUNTY IS SIMILAR TO MICHIGAN'S DISTRIBUTION.

The overall figures for the two counties show two very different communities – a very young population in Mecosta County and an older population in Osceola County. When FSU is taken out of the picture (areas outside of the Big Rapids area), the two counties are very similar in population, with many of Mecosta County's townships having older populations.

Table 2: Age and Gender Distribution in 2000

	Mecosta County		Osceola County		Michigan
	#	%	#	%	%
Under 5	2,431	6.0	1,428	6.2	6.8
5-17	6,708	16.5	5,514	23.7	19.4

18-24	8,043	19.8	1,207	5.2	9.4
25-34	4,386	10.8	2,603	11.2	13.7
35-44	4,930	12.2	3,545	15.3	16.1
45-54	4,731	11.7	3,114	13.4	13.8
55-64	3,985	9.8	2,502	10.8	8.7
65-84	4,818	11.9	2,964	12.7	10.9
85 and over	521	1.3	320	1.4	1.4
Median Age	31.9	---	37.6	---	35.5
Male	20,513	50.6	11,437	49.3	49.0
Female	20,040	49.4	11,760	50.7	51.0
Total	40,553	100.0	23,197	100.0	100.0

Source: U.S. Census of Population

Household Distribution

Mecosta County has a slightly lower proportion of family households (66.3 percent) than Michigan (Table 3), but the proportion of married couple family households is slightly higher. The County has a similar proportion of one-parent households as Michigan. Since the County has a lower proportion of family household, it follows that it has a higher proportion (33.7 percent) of non-family households than the State. Mecosta County's figure of 2.5 persons per household is also similar to Michigan. When FSU is taken out of the picture (areas outside of the Big Rapids area), the proportion of family households increases.

Osceola County has a higher proportion of family households (72.4 percent) than Michigan, including a higher proportion of married couple households (58.1 percent). The County has a similar proportion of one-parent households as Michigan. Since the County has a high proportion of family households, it follows that it has a lower proportion (27.6 percent) of non-family households. Osceola County's figure of 2.6 persons per household is the same as Michigan's.

Table 3: Household Distribution in 2000

	Total Households	Family Households				Non-Family Households			Persons Per Household	Persons in Group Quarters
		Total	Married Couple	Female Householder, no spouse	Male Householder, no spouse	Total	Householder living alone	Householder 65+ living alone		
Mecosta County	14,915	9,893	7,946	1,385	562	5,022	3,649	1,321	2.5	3,383
(%)	100.0	66.3	53.3	9.3	5.7	33.7	24.5	8.9	---	---
Osceola Co.	8,861	6,413	5,152	859	402	2,448	2,004	865	2.6	360
%	100.0	72.4	58.1	9.7	6.3	27.6	22.6	9.8	---	---
Michigan (%)	100.0	68.0	51.4	12.5	4.1	32.0	26.2	9.4	2.6	---

Source: U.S. Census of Population

EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

BETWEEN 2000 AND 2004 MECOSTA COUNTY EXPERIENCED A STEADY, AND SLIGHTLY GROWING, LABOR FORCE, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME EXPERIENCING A SLOWER RATE IN GROWTH OF EMPLOYED, RESULTING IN AN INCREASING UNEMPLOYMENT RATE (TABLE 4). THE LABOR FORCE REACHED 18,775 PEOPLE IN 2004, WITH AN ANNUAL AVERAGE OF 17,575 EMPLOYED AND 1,225 UNEMPLOYED. MECOSTA COUNTY'S UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IS LOWER THAN THE STATE.

Between 2000 and 2004 Osceola County experienced a fairly steady labor force, but a number of employed people that decreased, resulting in an increased unemployment rate, which decreased in 2004. The labor force was 10,650 in 2004, with an annual average of 9,775 employed and 850 unemployed. The County's unemployment rate is consistently higher than rates in Michigan, or the national unemployment rates.

Employment Distribution

Table 5 shows that Mecosta County has a higher proportion of its population employed in the agriculture, construction, retail, transportation, education, and entertainment sectors than the population in Michigan. The proportion of people employed in Education accounts for 29.6 percent of the population's employment – much higher than the 18.6 percent in Region 8 or the 19.9 percent in Michigan (FSU's location in Mecosta County influences this figure). These figures indicate the County's residents' types of employment and do not necessarily represent jobs located within Mecosta County. The County's top three job categories (Education, Manufacturing, and Retail) are the same as Michigan, but in a different order.

Table 4: Employment Trends

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Mecosta County					
Labor Force	17,950	18,275	18,100	18,875	18,775
Employment	17,225	17,325	17,100	17,675	17,575
Unemployment	725	975	1,000	1,200	1,225
Unemployment Rate	4.1	5.3	5.6	6.4	6.5
Osceola County					
Labor Force	10,875	11,100	10,400	10,575	10,650
Employment	10,275	10,200	9,625	9,675	9,775
Unemployment	600	900	775	900	850
Unemployment Rate	5.5	8.0	7.5	8.6	8.0
Michigan					
Unemployment Rate	3.6	5.3	6.2	7.3	6.8

United States					
Unemployment Rate	4.0	4.7	5.8	6.0	5.5

Source: Michigan Department of Career Development, Labor Market Information

TABLE 5 ALSO SHOWS THAT OSCEOLA COUNTY HAS A HIGHER PROPORTION OF ITS POPULATION EMPLOYED IN THE MANUFACTURING AND AGRICULTURE SECTORS THAN THE POPULATION IN MICHIGAN. THE PROPORTION OF PEOPLE EMPLOYED IN AGRICULTURE IS OVER TRIPLE THE STATE'S PERCENTAGE. MANUFACTURING ACCOUNTS FOR 31.7 PERCENT OF THE POPULATION'S EMPLOYMENT – MUCH HIGHER THAN THE 22.5 PERCENT IN MICHIGAN. THESE FIGURES INDICATE THE COUNTY'S RESIDENTS' TYPES OF EMPLOYMENT AND DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT JOBS LOCATED WITHIN OSCEOLA COUNTY. WHILE OSCEOLA COUNTY HAS AN UNUSUAL DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT, THE TOP THREE JOB CATEGORIES (MANUFACTURING, EDUCATION, AND RETAIL) ARE THE SAME IN THE COUNTY AND STATE.

Table 5: Employment Distribution in 2000

	Mecosta County		Osceola County		Michigan
	#	%	#	%	%
Employed Persons 16 and Over	17,470	100.0	10,012	100.0	100.0
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	435	2.5	380	3.8	1.1
Construction	1,124	6.4	607	6.1	6.0
Manufacturing	2,957	16.9	3,176	31.7	22.5
Wholesale Trade	365	2.1	196	2.0	3.3
Retail Trade	2,217	12.7	1,166	11.6	11.9
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	740	4.2	424	4.2	4.1
Information	333	1.9	132	1.3	2.1
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental leasing	548	3.1	254	2.5	5.3
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	679	3.9	340	3.4	8.0
Education, health and social services	5,165	29.6	1,845	18.4	19.9
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	1,660	9.5	712	7.1	7.6
Other services (except public administration)	749	4.3	415	4.1	4.6
Public Administration	498	2.9	365	3.6	3.6

Source: U.S. Census of Population

Income and Poverty

Mecosta County's median household income of \$33,849 is much lower than Michigan's median of \$44,667 (Table 6). The County's per capita income of \$16,372 is also lower than the State. Mecosta County has a higher percentage of people living below the poverty level than the State.

Osceola County's median household income of \$34,102 is lower than Michigan's median of \$44,667. The County's per capita income of \$15,632 is lower than the State. Osceola County has a higher percentage of people living below the poverty level than the State.

Table 6: Income and Poverty in 2000

	Median Household Income	Per Capita Income	% of Population Below Poverty Level
Mecosta County	\$33,849	\$16,372	14.7%
Osceola County	\$34,102	\$15,632	12.5%
Michigan	\$44,667	\$22,168	10.3%

Source: U.S. Census of Population

Community-Specific Demographics

Table 7 provides a set of information for each community in the two-county area. Both counties have a higher percentage of residents over 65 years of age. In Mecosta County the figure is 13.1 percent, in Osceola County it is 14.1 percent, and in Michigan it is 12.3 percent. Some individual communities have very high percentages of people over 65 including Morton Township in Mecosta County (30.9 percent) and Hartwick Township in Osceola County (21.2 percent). Mecosta County has a similar proportion of people with disabilities (31.7 percent) as Michigan (31.0 percent). Osceola has a higher percentage (37.2 percent). Some individual communities have very high percentages of people with disabilities including the Village of Barryton in Mecosta County (56.1 percent) and the City of Evart in Osceola County (55.1 percent). Both counties have a higher percentage of people living below the poverty level than Michigan as-a-whole. In 2000, 13.9 percent of Michigan's residents were below the poverty level. In Mecosta County this figure was 17.3 percent and in Osceola County it was 16.6 percent. Some individual communities have very high percentages of people living below the poverty level including Chippewa Township in Mecosta County (24.5 percent) and the Village of Tustin in Osceola County (26.5 percent). Both Counties have lower median household incomes than Michigan, with a 2000 median household income of \$44,667. Mecosta County's median was \$33,849 and Osceola's was \$34,102. Some individual communities have lower median household incomes including the City of Big Rapids in Mecosta County (\$23,348) and the City of Evart in Osceola County (26.5 percent). Only two communities had higher median household incomes than Michigan – Colfax Township and Big Rapids Township (both in Mecosta County).

Table 7: Selected Information by Community

	2000 Pop.	% 65 & over	% with Disability	% Below Poverty Level	Median HH Income
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Michigan	9,938,444	12.3	31.0	13.9	\$44,667
Mecosta County	40,553	13.1	31.7	17.3	\$33,849
Cities					
Big Rapids	10,849	7.5	24.0	15.6	\$20,192
Villages					
Barryton	381	15.6	56.1	17.3	\$23,333
Mecosta	440	14.4	41.0	19.8	\$32,857
Morley	495	13.9	37.7	14.9	\$31,090
Stanwood	204	9.9	32.1	18.4	\$39,000
Townships					
Aetna	1,734	7.7	38.4	13.7	\$35,431
Austin	1,415	14.7	28.9	15.1	\$34,513
Big Rapids	3,249	13.0	25.6	12.4	\$47,933
Chippewa	1,239	19.3	41.5	24.5	\$33,859
Colfax	1,975	11.1	35.6	19.1	\$46,071
Deerfield	1,445	9.9	29.0	22.2	\$36,620
Fork	1,297	17.9	52.0	19.7	\$30,905
Grant	680	15.0	25.3	22.1	\$36,071
Green	3,209	10.6	28.9	18.2	\$39,036
Hinton	1,035	12.8	30.7	16.5	\$37,976
Martiny	1,606	21.5	45.7	19.3	\$31,681
Mecosta	2,231	11.7	31.4	19.9	\$37,083
Millbrook	1,081	13.5	38.0	16.9	\$35,238
Morton	3,157	30.9	31.5	16.8	\$44,558
Sheridan	1,357	13.0	46.9	21.4	\$31,050
Wheatland	1,474	14.7	33.0	16.1	\$33,654
Osceola County	23,197	14.1	37.2	16.6	\$34,102
Cities					
Evart City	1,738	15.4	55.1	18.9	\$23,348
Reed City (City)	2,430	17.8	39.2	15.3	\$30,756
Villages					
Hersey Village	374	8.3	21.7	19.9	\$38,929
LeRoy Village	267	8.3	19.0	13.7	\$32,188
Marion Village	836	17.0	44.5	16.9	\$26,467
Tustin Village	237	13.1	54.7	26.5	\$29,063
Townships					
Burdell	1,004	12.8	41.7	15.9	\$36,731
Cedar	406	17.1	36.5	15.1	\$38,500
Evart	1,513	15.0	39.5	14.0	\$35,550
Hartwick	629	21.2	40.0	13.1	\$34,286
Hersey	1,472	10.4	35.5	18.7	\$39,907
Highland	1,207	12.1	28.1	15.5	\$32,772
LeRoy	892	10.9	27.8	12.4	\$37,292
Lincoln	1,629	9.7	36.3	20.3	\$37,578
Marion	744	11.8	36.1	19.3	\$39,286
Middle Branch	858	19.1	40.0	23.7	\$27,014
Orient	803	15.1	36.8	15.0	\$32,024
Osceola	1,118	14.8	33.4	18.2	\$36,346
Richmond	1,695	13.1	27.0	13.4	\$42,865
Rose Lake	1,231	16.0	30.2	17.6	\$34,667
Sherman	1,081	11.2	37.0	10.8	\$42,569
Sylvan	1,033	16.2	46.7	16.8	\$30,833

Source: U.S. Census, WMRPC

Community-Specific Commuting Patterns

Table 8 shows selected commuting patterns for individual communities in Mecosta and Osceola counties. Both counties had a lower percentage of people that drive cars, trucks, or vans to work than Michigan as-a-whole. In Michigan 42.4 percent of the population drive a car, truck, or van to work – this figure is 36.6 percent in Mecosta County and 38.6 percent in Osceola County. This can be attributed to the student population in Mecosta County (many of which do not work) and the large number of retired people in both counties. There are individual communities where the percentage of the population driving to work is higher including Green Township in Mecosta County (45.6 percent) and Richmond Township in Osceola County (48.2 percent).

Both counties have a higher percentage of people that car pool. In Michigan, 4.4 percent of the population car pools. In Mecosta County this figure is 5.4 percent and in Osceola County the figure is 5.6 percent. There are individual communities where the percentage of the population car pooling to work is higher including the Village of Stanwood in Mecosta County (11.3 percent) and the Village of Tustin in Osceola County (10.2 percent).

Both counties have a lower percentage of the population that uses public transportation to commute to work. In Michigan 0.6 percent of the population uses public transit to get to work – in Mecosta County the figure is 0.4 percent and in Osceola County the figure is 0.2 percent. Many communities have 0.0 percent using public transit to get to work. There are individual communities where the percentage of the population using public transit to commute to work is higher including the Village of Stanwood in Mecosta County (1.4 percent) and the Village of Tustin in Osceola County (0.8 percent).

Mecosta County (5.1 percent) and Osceola County (3.5 percent) both have a higher percent of its population that rides a bicycle, walks, or works at home than Michigan as-a-whole (2.6 percent). There are individual communities where the percentage of the population biking, walking, or working at home is even higher including the City of Big Rapids in Mecosta County (10.1 percent) and Marion Township in Osceola County (6.8 percent).

Both counties have a higher percentage of people with less than a 30 minute commute than Michigan as-a-whole. In Michigan 68.5 percent of the population commuted less than 30 minutes each way, compared to 70.5 percent in Mecosta County and 72.1 percent in Osceola County. This figure went as high as 87.4 percent in the City Big Rapids in Mecosta County and 85.6 percent in Richmond Township in Osceola County.

While a higher percentage of people had a fairly short commute in the two counties, both had a higher percentage of commuters that drove more than an hour (one way) to their place of employment. In Michigan, 6.0 percent of the population drove for more than an hour. In Mecosta County the figure was 10.3 percent and in Osceola County the figure was 6.4 percent. This figure went as high as 21.7 percent in Deerfield Township in Mecosta County and 11.6 percent in Orient Township in Osceola County.

Table 8: Commuting Patterns by Community

	% population	% Car Pool	% Use Public	% that bike, walk, or	% with less than 30	% with more than
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	driving car, truck, or van to work		Transit	work at home	minute one way commute	60 minute one way commute
Michigan	42.4	4.4	0.6	2.6	68.5	6.0
Mecosta County	36.6	5.4	0.4	5.1	70.5	10.3
Cities						
Big Rapids	30.5	3.8	0.7	10.1	87.4	6.1
Villages						
Barryton	32.5	4.7	0.5	3.7	52.1	5.5
Mecosta	35.5	7.4	0.0	5.4	42.9	12.0
Morley	31.8	9.6	0.0	3.7	47.4	17.7
Stanwood	39.6	11.3	1.4	0.9	58.6	11.5
Townships						
Aetna	38.1	9.1	0.2	3.4	37.5	20.3
Austin	32.6	5.2	0.6	4.6	67.1	14.4
Big Rapids	44.7	5.9	0.0	3.5	84.5	5.6
Chippewa	35.2	6.6	0.0	2.5	69.9	8.9
Colfax	44.5	4.3	0.0	3.0	79.7	8.9
Deerfield	36.2	6.5	0.4	3.8	41.5	21.7
Fork	35.0	6.4	0.2	2.5	47.8	14.7
Grant	40.1	3.1	0.4	3.9	78.9	9.9
Green	45.6	7.9	0.8	4.0	84.9	5.0
Hinton	40.0	6.2	0.0	3.9	46.5	15.3
Martiny	35.5	5.5	0.5	2.1	56.9	17.6
Mecosta	42.6	7.4	0.2	2.6	67.1	14.9
Millbrook	39.3	5.3	0.0	5.4	51.0	10.0
Morton	30.7	3.1	0.3	2.4	56.6	17.0
Sheridan	33.4	6.4	0.2	1.8	47.6	8.5
Wheatland	40.7	4.9	0.1	4.1	57.9	9.9
Osceola County	38.6	5.6	0.2	3.5	72.1	6.4
Cities						
Evart City	32.7	6.6	0.3	3.2	73.0	6.1
Reed City (City)	37.9	5.2	0.0	3.0	81.2	5.3
Villages						
Hersey Village	48.9	3.2	0.5	4.3	82.4	2.1
LeRoy Village	40.7	5.2	0.0	3.4	70.2	3.2
Marion Village	37.3	6.0	0.0	4.2	67.8	4.3
Tustin Village	35.1	10.2	0.8	5.7	78.1	2.1
Townships						
Burdell	42.2	4.8	0.0	1.9	72.0	6.8
Cedar	39.6	6.8	0.7	0.7	53.9	7.8
Evart	36.3	5.5	0.0	4.4	77.9	4.6
Hartwick	34.5	3.8	0.2	4.4	63.8	8.7
Hersey	38.3	4.0	0.2	4.1	82.0	7.9
Highland	37.3	4.7	0.0	6.5	75.9	6.8
LeRoy	42.1	7.4	0.0	1.1	58.8	8.3
Lincoln	39.7	6.7	0.0	3.9	70.4	3.4
Marion	37.8	6.4	0.0	6.8	56.3	7.6
Middle Branch	35.9	5.3	0.5	2.7	50.2	9.4
Orient	37.5	6.5	0.7	2.7	54.7	11.6
Osceola	39.0	5.3	0.7	2.7	76.6	3.9
Richmond	48.2	5.0	0.0	2.8	85.6	5.2
Rose Lake	37.5	4.1	0.1	2.9	55.9	10.5
Sherman	41.2	5.6	0.4	3.5	71.4	7.4
Sylvan	32.1	7.0	0.2	4.0	75.0	7.8

Source: U.S. Census, WMRPC

Physical Features

Location

The study area includes Osceola and Mecosta County. These two counties are located in the western Lower Peninsula of Michigan. Key cities include the City of Big Rapids, in Mecosta County, and the Cities of Evart and Reed City in Osceola County.

Primary Transportation Routes

The primary transportation corridors through the two-county area include:

- US-131 – this is the only limited access highway in the two-county area. US-131 runs north-south along the western edge of the two counties and links the area to Grand Rapids (and communities further south) to the south and Cadillac (and communities further north) to the north. There are eight exits from US-131 in the two counties. Big Rapids and Reed City are located off US-131.
- M-66 – This is the other major north-south corridor and serves the eastern portion of both counties. There are several villages (Marion, Barryton, and Remus) located along M-66 in the two county area than links the area to Ionia to the south and Kalkaska to the north.
- M-20 is the primary east-west corridor in Mecosta County and it weaves through several communities including Big Rapids, Rodney, and Mecosta. M-20 goes to Mt. Pleasant to the east and jogs south on US-131 before continuing to the west towards Muskegon.
- US-10 is the primary east-west corridor in Osceola County. Both Reed City and Evart are located on the route that links Clare to the east to Baldwin to the west.
- M-115 cuts across the northeast corner of Osceola County and links Clare (to the east) to Cadillac (to the northwest).

Primary Trip Generators

There are numerous trip generators within the two-county study area. The following is a sample of trip generators:

- County facilities (administration, court, law enforcement, etc) in the two county seats of the City of Big Rapids (Mecosta County) and the City of Reed City (Osceola County).
- Individual government facilities (varying levels) in each city, village, and township.
- Ferris State University in City of Big Rapids.
- Commercial Districts in:
 - City of Big Rapids
 - City of Reed City
 - City of Evart
 - Big Rapids Township
 - Village Centers (Marion, Tustin, LeRoy, and Hersey in Osceola County; and Morley, Stanwood, Mecosta, Barryton, and Remus in Mecosta County).

- Canadian Lakes Area in Mecosta County
 - Commercial strips along US-10 and Northland Drive.
- School Districts
 - Evart
 - Reed City
 - Pine River
 - Marion
 - Big Rapids
 - Morley-Stanwood
 - Lakeview
 - Chippewa Hills
- County and local parks
- State game areas
- White Pine Trail State Park

Survey Results

Distribution

The West Michigan Regional Planning Commission (WMRPC) worked with the Mecosta Osceola Transit Authority (MOTA) and the Transit Study Committee to develop a suitable survey tool to distribute across Mecosta and Osceola County (with the exception of the City of Big Rapids that is served by DART). The survey was mailed in June 2006 to 3,500 random households across the two counties. Distribution was based on the population size of each community. A mailing service was used to distribute the surveys and provide the mailing list. The surveys were due back by July 1, 2006. Additionally, 250 copies were sent to nine public locations across the area and another 250 surveys were distributed to regular users of the system. Only a few surveys were returned from the nine locations, so they were tabulated with the randomly mailed surveys. The surveys that were distributed to the regular users were tabulated separately. There were 216 random surveys returned and 24 surveys of regular system users returned.

Random Survey Results

A complete description of the randomly distributed and collected results is provided to assist with the decision-making process. The WMRPC strives to simply provide the results without providing opinions since the staff involved in the project are not policy setting members of the WMRPC.

Question 1. – What method of transportation do you and others in your household normally use for traveling to work or for seeking employment? Please check all that apply.

Answer	#	%
Personal Vehicle	118	49.0
Car Pool	5	2.1
Transit	5	2.1
Taxi	0	0.0
Bicycle	6	2.5
Walk	4	1.7
A neighbor, relative, or friend drives	9	3.7
No one in this household is employed or seeking employment	92	38.2
Other	2	0.8
Total Responses	241	100.0

Nearly half of the respondents (49.0 percent) use a personal vehicle to travel to work or to seek employment. The next largest category is people that are not employed or seeking employment (38.2 percent). The remaining categories are all small, but indicate that more people rely on a neighbor or ride a bicycle than use the existing transit system. An equal proportion of respondents car pool and use transit (2.1 percent for each category).

Question 1 (follow-up) – What community do you typically travel to for this function?

Answer	#	%
NE Osceola	7	4.9
SE Osceola	5	3.5
NW Osceola	11	7.7
SW Osceola	11	7.7
NE Mecosta	12	8.5
SE Mecosta	19	13.4
NW Mecosta	32	22.5
SW Mecosta	10	7.0
Cadillac	8	5.6
Clare	2	1.4
Grand Rapids	7	4.9
Greenville	1	0.7
Isabella County	0	0.0
Kent County	4	2.8
Lake County	0	0.0
Missaukee County	0	0.0
Montcalm County	3	2.1
Mt. Pleasant	3	2.1
Newaygo County	0	0.0
Wexford County	0	0.0
Various	4	2.8
Other	4	2.8
Total Responses	142	100.0

This set of answers demonstrates the variety of locations that people typically travel. The most frequently cited location of respondents is NW Mecosta County (Big Rapids Area) with 22.5 percent of the responses. SE Mecosta follows with 13.4 percent (Canadian Lakes Area). NE Mecosta, with 8.5 percent is next followed by the NW and SW quadrants of Osceola County. 23.8 percent of the responses were locations within Osceola County and 51.4 percent were locations within Mecosta County. Nearly 25 percent of responses were for locations outside of the two-county area.

Question 2 – What method of transportation do you and others in your household normally use for traveling to school or training? Please check all that apply.

Answer	#	%
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Personal Vehicle	61	26.2
Car Pool	4	1.7
Transit	6	2.6
Taxi	0	0.0
Bicycle	2	0.9
Walk	1	0.4
A neighbor, relative, or friend drives	5	2.1
No one in this household is attending school	147	63.1
Other	7	3.0
Total Responses	233	100.0

The majority of respondents are not attending school (63.1 percent). Most of the respondents that have people attending school use a personal vehicle (26.2 percent).

Question 2 (follow-up) – What community do you typically travel to for this function?

Answer	#	%
NE Osceola	6	6.7
SE Osceola	4	4.5
NW Osceola	7	7.9
SW Osceola	10	11.2
NE Mecosta	8	9.0
SE Mecosta	9	10.1
NW Mecosta	16	18.0
SW Mecosta	8	9.0
Cadillac	4	4.5
Clare	1	1.1
Grand Rapids	4	4.5
Greenville	0	0.0
Isabella County	0	0.0
Kent County	0	0.0
Lake County	0	0.0
Missaukee County	0	0.0
Montcalm County	1	1.1
Mt. Pleasant	3	3.4
Newaygo County	0	0.0
Wexford County	0	0.0
Various	3	3.4
Other	5	5.6
Total Responses	89	100.0

Again, this set of answers demonstrates the variety of locations that people typically travel. The most frequently cited location of respondents is again NW Mecosta County (Big Rapids Area) with 18.0 percent of the responses. SW Osceola follows with 11.2 percent (Reed City Area). SE Mecosta, with 10.1 percent is next. 30.3 percent of the responses were locations within Osceola County and 46.1 percent were locations within

Mecosta County. Nearly 24 percent of responses were for locations outside of the two-county area.

Question 3 – What method of transportation do you and others in your household normally use for shopping? Please check all that apply.

Answer	#	%
Personal Vehicle	202	83.5
Car Pool	4	1.7
Transit	6	2.5
Taxi	2	0.8
Bicycle	1	0.4
Walk	4	1.7
A neighbor, relative, or friend drives	20	8.3
Other	3	1.2
Total Responses	242	100.0

The vast majority (83.5 percent) of responses use a personal vehicle for shopping trips, followed by a neighbor, relative or friend driving (8.3 percent).

Question 3 (follow-up) – What community do you typically travel to for this function?

Answer	#	%
NE Osceola	9	3.3
SE Osceola	5	1.8

NW Osceola	5	1.8
SW Osceola	13	4.8
NE Mecosta	12	4.4
SE Mecosta	22	8.1
NW Mecosta	115	42.1
SW Mecosta	10	3.7
Cadillac	27	9.9
Clare	1	0.4
Grand Rapids	13	4.8
Greenville	1	0.4
Isabella County	2	0.7
Kent County	2	0.7
Lake County	0	0.0
Missaukee County	0	0.0
Montcalm County	5	1.8
Mt. Pleasant	25	9.2
Newaygo County	0	0.0
Wexford County	1	0.4
Various	2	0.7
Other	3	1.1
Total Responses	273	100.0

The most frequently cited location of respondents is again NW Mecosta County (Big Rapids Area) with 42.1 percent of the responses. Unlike work and school, the next most cited responses are outside of the two-county area – Cadillac with 9.9 percent of the responses followed by Mount Pleasant with 9.2 percent of the responses. SE Mecosta, with 8.1 percent is next. Only 11.7 percent of the responses were locations within Osceola County and 58.3 percent were locations within Mecosta County. 30.0 percent of responses were for locations outside of the two-county area.

Question 4 – What method of transportation do you and others in your household normally use for medical or dental visits? Please check all that apply.

Answer	#	%
Personal Vehicle	197	83.5
Car Pool	5	2.1

Transit	3	1.3
Taxi	0	0.0
Bicycle	2	0.8
Walk	1	0.4
A neighbor, relative, or friend drives	24	10.2
No medical or dental visits	1	0.4
Other	3	1.3
Total Responses	236	100.0

The vast majority (83.5 percent) of responses use a personal vehicle for medical and trips, followed by help from a neighbor, relative or friend (10.2 percent).

Question 4 (follow-up) – What community do you typically travel to for this function?

Answer	#	%
NE Osceola	7	2.3
SE Osceola	10	3.3
NW Osceola	3	1.0
SW Osceola	15	4.9
NE Mecosta	11	3.6
SE Mecosta	53	17.4
NW Mecosta	87	28.6
SW Mecosta	16	5.3
Cadillac	21	6.9
Clare	2	0.7
Grand Rapids	33	10.9
Greenville	1	0.3
Isabella County	2	0.7
Kent County	3	1.0
Lake County	1	0.3
Missaukee County	0	0.0
Montcalm County	11	3.6
Mt. Pleasant	10	3.3
Newaygo County	0	0.0
Wexford County	3	1.0
Various	1	0.3
Other	14	4.6
Total Responses	304	100.0

This question shows the many directions that people go for medical and dental care. The most frequently cited location of respondents is NW Mecosta County (Big Rapids Area) with 28.6 percent of the responses. SE Mecosta, with 17.4 percent is next. Only 11.5 percent of the responses were locations within Osceola County and 54.9 percent were locations within Mecosta County. 33.6 percent of responses were for locations outside of the two-county area.

Question 5 – What method of transportation do you and others in your household normally use for social or recreational trips? Please check all that apply.

Answer	#	%
Personal Vehicle	200	76.3
Car Pool	14	5.3
Transit	4	1.5
Taxi	0	0.0
Bicycle	4	1.5
Walk	4	1.5
A neighbor, relative, or friend drives	31	11.8
No social or recreational trips	1	0.4
Other	4	1.5
Total Responses	262	100.0

Question 5 (follow-up) – What community do you typically travel to for this function?

Answer	#	%
NE Osceola	7	2.6
SE Osceola	5	1.8
NW Osceola	9	3.3
SW Osceola	12	4.4
NE Mecosta	18	6.7
SE Mecosta	31	11.4
NW Mecosta	62	22.7
SW Mecosta	18	6.7
Cadillac	14	5.1
Clare	0	0.0
Grand Rapids	20	7.3
Kent County	2	0.7
Lake County	1	0.4
Montcalm County	2	0.7
Mt. Pleasant	14	5.1
Wexford County	1	0.4
Various	39	14.3
Other	18	6.7
Total Responses	273	100.0

This question shows the many directions that people go for social and recreational activities. The most frequently cited location of respondents is NW Mecosta County (Big Rapids Area) with 22.7 percent of the responses. The next most popular response was “various,” with 14.3 percent of the responses. Only 12.1 percent of the responses were locations within Osceola County and 47.5 percent were locations within Mecosta County. 40.4 percent of responses were for locations outside of the two-county area.

Question 6 – For each of the following items, during the past 12 months have you or anyone else in your household had to delay or cancel an appointment or errand because you did not have access to transportation?

Answer	#	%
Yes	27	12.7
No	186	87.3
Total Responses	213	100.0

While most people (87.3 percent) have access to transportation and did not have to delay or cancel a trip, there are still a significant percentage of people (12.7 percent) that did have to delay or cancel an appointment or errand.

Question 6 (follow up) – If yes, please check all that apply.

Answer	#	%
Work	6	13.0
Medical/Dental	14	30.4
School	0	0.0
Shopping	14	30.4
Social/Recreation	8	17.4
Other	4	8.7
Total Responses	46	100.0

Of the 46 responses two categories tied for the highest response: medical/dental and shopping both accounted for 30.4 percent of responses.

Question 7 – Do you, or others in your household, have problems meeting transportation needs?

Answer	#	%
Yes	25	11.6
No	191	88.4
Total Responses	216	100.0

While most people (88.4 percent) do not have problems meeting transportation needs, a significant percentage of respondents (11.6 percent) do have such problems.

Question 7 (follow up) – If yes, what do your transportation limitations keep you (or others in your household) from doing?

Answer	#	%
Working or seeking employment	10	16.7
Medical/Dental visits	16	26.7

Shopping	14	23.3
Social/Recreational activities	13	21.7
Attending training or school	4	6.7
Other	3	5.0
Total Responses	60	100

Of the 60 responses medical/dental was chosen most frequently (26.7 percent) followed by shopping (23.3 percent) and social/recreational (21.7 percent).

Question 8 – Are there any reasons why those in your household do not drive or limit the amount of their driving? (adults only)

Answer	#	%
Yes	76	36.2
No	134	63.8
Total Responses	210	100.0

A significant percentage of respondents (36.2 percent) limit the amount of their driving for one or more reasons.

Question 8 (follow-up) – If yes, please explain why (check all that apply)

Answer	#	%
Do not drive in poor weather	34	24.8
Not licensed to drive	12	8.8
Do not drive at night	27	19.7
Disability	16	11.7
Expense of owning and maintaining a vehicle	38	27.7
Do not own a vehicle	6	4.4
Other	4	2.9
Total Responses	137	100.0

Nearly 28 percent of the responses (from people that limit their driving) cite the expense of owning and maintaining a vehicle. Nearly 25 percent limit driving in poor weather and nearly 20 percent limit their driving at night.

Question 9 – Do you or members of your household use any of the following types of transportation? (check all that apply)

Answer	#	%
Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority	10	26.3
Big Rapids Dial-a-Ride (DART)	6	15.8
Taxi	2	5.3

School buses	16	42.1
Other	4	10.6
Total Responses	38	100.0

Of the relatively few that listed using transit, 42.1 percent use school buses and 26.3 percent use MOTA. DART is not a large number, but the survey was not delivered in the City of Big Rapids.

Question 10 – How often do you or others in your household use these transportation services?

Answer	#	%
A few times per week	22	61.1
A few times per month	4	11.1
A few times per year	10	27.8
Total Responses	36	100.0

Of the relatively few that listed using transit, 61.1 percent use it a few times per week, 11.1 percent use it a few times per month, and 27.8 percent use it a few times per year.

Question 11 – If the level of public transportation services was increased would you or members of your household use it more often?

Answer	#	%
Definitely yes	24	11.8
Probably yes	18	8.9
Probably not	78	38.4
Definitely not	38	18.7
Not sure	45	22.2
Total Responses	203	100.0

Over 20 percent of respondents feel they would use public transportation more if services were increased. Over 57 percent do not feel they would increase use of the system and 22.2 percent are not sure.

Question 12 – If the level of public transportation services was increased, where would you or members of your household typically travel? (check all that apply)

Answer	#	%
Trips within Mecosta County	58	30.5
Trips within Osceola County	14	7.4
Trips between Osceola and Mecosta counties	24	12.6
Trips to adjacent counties	35	18.4

Not sure	48	25.3
Other	11	5.8
Total Responses	190	100.0

Respondents would make the most trips within Mecosta County (30.5 percent). The second most chosen response was “unsure” with 25.3 percent of respondents.

Question 13 – If you, or other members of your household, use (or would use) public transportation, what days of the week and times of the day would best serve your needs? Please check all that apply.

Time/Day	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Not sure	Total
Morning	12	27	26	30	28	31	14	36	204
%	2.3	5.2	5.0	5.8	5.4	6.0	2.7	6.9	39.2
Afternoon	8	22	20	23	24	23	19	35	174
%	1.5	4.2	3.8	4.4	4.6	4.4	3.6	6.7	33.4
Evening	10	17	15	18	17	16	12	38	143
%	1.9	3.3	2.9	3.5	3.3	3.1	2.3	7.3	27.4
Total	30	66	61	71	69	70	45	109	521
%	5.8	12.7	11.7	13.6	13.2	13.4	8.6	20.9	100.0

While this table looks confusing, it really shows that people favor Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday morning services (except for those that are not sure when would be the best time). Overall, morning services are preferred, followed by afternoon services. Sunday received the least number of responses, followed by Saturday.

Question 14 – How many people live in your household?

Answer	#	%
1 person	43	19.9
2 people	125	57.9
3 people	24	11.1
4 people	8	3.7
5 people	11	5.1
6 people	4	1.9
7 people	1	0.5
Total Responses	216	100.0

The median household size of survey respondents is 1.52 persons per household, which is smaller than the median household size of the area (about 2.5 persons per household). 57.9 percent of respondents live in 2 person households. Nearly 20 percent live in one-person households.

Question 14 (follow-up) – What are the ages of each?

Answer	#	%
Under 18	62	13.8

18-34	41	9.1
35-50	64	14.3
51-65	131	29.2
Over 65	151	33.6
Total Responses	449	100.0

The median age of respondents households is 57.6 years, which is considerably higher than the actual median age of 31.9 in Mecosta County or 37.6 in Osceola County.

Question 15 – How many functional passenger vehicles do you and other members of your household own?

Answer	#	%
0	9	4.2
1	59	27.4
2	107	49.8
3	28	13.0
4	9	4.2
5	3	1.4
Total Responses	215	100.0

Only 4.2 percent of respondents have no vehicle. Almost half have two vehicles (49.8 percent).

Question 16 – How many licensed drivers live in your household?

Answer	#	%
0	7	3.2
1	48	22.2
2	137	63.4
3	17	7.9
4	7	3.2
Total Responses	216	100.0

Only 3.2 percent of respondents have no licensed driver in the household. Nearly two-thirds (63.4 percent) have two licensed drivers.

Question 17 – Where is your household located?

Answer	#	%	Pop.%
NE Osceola	14	6.5	8.1
SE Osceola	0	0.0	11.7
NW Osceola	20	9.3	8.9

SW Osceola	8	3.7	15.1
NE Mecosta	27	12.6	11.1
SE Mecosta	82	38.1	10.8
NW Mecosta	36	16.7	17.2
SW Mecosta	28	13.0	17.0
Total Responses	215	100.0	---

While responses are distributed fairly well there are some areas that are under represented. The southeast quadrant of Osceola County received no responses, but the population accounts for 11.7 percent of the study area. Likewise, the southwest quadrant of Osceola County is under represented, with only 3.7 percent of responses coming from the Reed City Area (but accounting for 15.1 percent of the study area's population. Southeast Mecosta County is the most represented area, with 38.1 percent of responses coming from that quadrant of Mecosta County.

Question 18 – Do you feel mass transit is important enough that Mecosta and Osceola counties should have a special millage in place to support a system?

Answer	#	%
Yes	127	63.8
No	72	36.2
Total Responses	199	100.0

Even though most people responding to the survey do not use the existing transit services or would use expanded services, nearly two-thirds of respondents (63.8 percent) feel that transit is important enough that the area should have a special millage in place to support the system.

Question 18 (follow-up) – If yes, how much would you be willing to pay per year to support such a system? (Circle highest amount)

Answer	#	%
\$25	51	48.6
\$50	21	20.0
\$100	19	18.1
\$150	1	1.0
\$200	4	3.8

\$250	1	1.0
\$300	8	7.6
Total Responses	105	100.0

All those answering this question were willing to pay at least \$25 annually to support a transit system.

Non-Random Survey Results (Transit System Users)

Due to the limited number of responses (24), and the fact that this portion of the survey process was not randomly distributed, the WMRPC simply presents the tables with the tabulated information.

Question 1. – What method of transportation do you and others in your household normally use for traveling to work or for seeking employment? Please check all that apply.

Answer	#	%
Personal Vehicle	6	18.8
Car Pool	0	0.0
Transit	16	50.0
Taxi	0	0.0
Bicycle	0	0.0
Walk	2	6.3
A neighbor, relative, or friend drives	2	6.3
No one in this household is employed or seeking employment	5	15.6
Other	1	3.1
Total Responses	32	100.0

Question 1 (follow-up) – What community do you typically travel to for this function?

Answer	#	%
NE Osceola	1	4.5
SE Osceola	1	4.5
NW Osceola	1	4.5
SW Osceola	2	9.0
NE Mecosta	1	4.5
SE Mecosta	3	13.6
NW Mecosta	10	45.5

SW Mecosta	1	4.5
Cadillac	1	4.5
Clare	0	0.0
Grand Rapids	0	0.0
Greenville	0	0.0
Isabella County	0	0.0
Kent County	0	0.0
Lake County	0	0.0
Missaukee County	0	0.0
Montcalm County	0	0.0
Mt. Pleasant	0	0.0
Newaygo County	0	0.0
Wexford County	0	0.0
Various	0	0.0
Other	1	4.5
Total Responses	22	100.0

Question 2 – What method of transportation do you and others in your household normally use for traveling to school or training? Please check all that apply.

Answer	#	%
Personal Vehicle	2	6.7
Car Pool	0	0.0
Transit	15	50.0
Taxi	0	0.0
Bicycle	0	0.0
Walk	0	0.0
A neighbor, relative, or friend drives	2	6.7
No one in this household is attending school	7	23.3
Other	4	13.3
Total Responses	30	100.0

Question 2 (follow-up) – What community do you typically travel to for this function?

Answer	#	%
NE Osceola	0	0.0
SE Osceola	0	0.0
NW Osceola	0	0.0
SW Osceola	0	0.0
NE Mecosta	0	0.0
SE Mecosta	1	10.0
NW Mecosta	8	80.0

SW Mecosta	0	0.0
Cadillac	0	0.0
Clare	0	0.0
Grand Rapids	0	0.0
Greenville	0	0.0
Isabella County	0	0.0
Kent County	0	0.0
Lake County	0	0.0
Missaukee County	0	0.0
Montcalm County	0	0.0
Mt. Pleasant	0	0.0
Newaygo County	0	0.0
Wexford County	0	0.0
Various	0	0.0
Other	1	10.0
Total Responses	10	100.0

Question 3 – What method of transportation do you and others in your household normally use for shopping? Please check all that apply.

Answer	#	%
Personal Vehicle	10	31.3
Car Pool	1	3.1
Transit	7	21.9
Taxi	0	0.0
Bicycle	1	3.1
Walk	3	9.4
A neighbor, relative, or friend drives	6	18.8
Other	4	12.5
Total Responses	32	100.0

Question 3 (follow-up) – What community do you typically travel to for this function?

Answer	#	%
NE Osceola	1	3.8
SE Osceola	1	3.8
NW Osceola	1	3.8
SW Osceola	1	3.8
NE Mecosta	2	7.7
SE Mecosta	2	7.7
NW Mecosta	14	53.8

SW Mecosta	2	7.7
Cadillac	0	0.0
Clare	0	0.0
Grand Rapids	0	0.0
Greenville	0	0.0
Isabella County	0	0.0
Kent County	0	0.0
Lake County	0	0.0
Missaukee County	0	0.0
Montcalm County	0	0.0
Mt. Pleasant	0	0.0
Newaygo County	0	0.0
Wexford County	0	0.0
Various	0	0.0
Other	2	7.7
Total Responses	26	100.0

Question 4 – What method of transportation do you and others in your household normally use for medical or dental visits? Please check all that apply.

Answer	#	%
Personal Vehicle	11	39.3
Car Pool	1	3.6
Transit	6	21.4
Taxi	0	0.0
Bicycle	0	0.0
Walk	0	0.0
A neighbor, relative, or friend drives	5	17.9
No medical or dental visits	0	0.0
Other	5	17.9
Total Responses	28	100.0

Question 4 (follow-up) – What community do you typically travel to for this function?

Answer	#	%
NE Osceola	1	4.0
SE Osceola	1	4.0
NW Osceola	1	4.0
SW Osceola	2	8.0
NE Mecosta	1	4.0
SE Mecosta	3	12.0
NW Mecosta	13	52.0

SW Mecosta	1	4.0
Cadillac	0	0.0
Clare	0	0.0
Grand Rapids	2	8.0
Greenville	0	0.0
Isabella County	0	0.0
Kent County	0	0.0
Lake County	0	0.0
Missaukee County	0	0.0
Montcalm County	0	0.0
Mt. Pleasant	0	0.0
Newaygo County	0	0.0
Wexford County	0	0.0
Various	0	0.0
Other	0	0.0
Total Responses	25	100.0

Question 5 – What method of transportation do you and others in your household normally use for social or recreational trips? Please check all that apply.

Answer	#	%
Personal Vehicle	9	30.0
Car Pool	1	3.3
Transit	9	30.0
Taxi	0	0.0
Bicycle	1	3.3
Walk	0	0.0
A neighbor, relative, or friend drives	6	20.0
No social or recreational trips	0	0.0
Other	4	13.3
Total Responses	30	100.0

Question 5 (follow-up) – What community do you typically travel to for this function?

Answer	#	%
NE Osceola	2	7.1
SE Osceola	2	7.1
NW Osceola	2	7.1
SW Osceola	2	7.1
NE Mecosta	2	7.1
SE Mecosta	3	10.7
NW Mecosta	10	35.7

SW Mecosta	2	7.1
Cadillac	0	0.0
Clare	0	0.0
Grand Rapids	0	0.0
Greenville	0	0.0
Isabella County	0	0.0
Kent County	0	0.0
Lake County	0	0.0
Missaukee County	0	0.0
Montcalm County	0	0.0
Mt. Pleasant	0	0.0
Newaygo County	0	0.0
Wexford County	0	0.0
Various	3	10.7
Other	0	0.0
Total Responses	28	100.0

Question 6 – For each of the following items, during the past 12 months have you or anyone else in your household had to delay or cancel an appointment or errand because you did not have access to transportation?

Answer	#	%
Yes	11	45.8
No	13	54.2
Total Responses	24	100.0

Question 6 (follow up) – If yes, please check all that apply.

Answer	#	%
Work	0	0.0
Medical/Dental	7	31.8
School	3	13.6
Shopping	6	27.3
Social/Recreation	6	27.3
Other	0	0.0
Total Responses	22	100.0

Question 7 – Do you, or others in your household, have problems meeting transportation needs?

Answer	#	%
Yes	14	58.3
No	10	41.7
Total Responses	24	100.0

Question 7 (follow up) – If yes, what do your transportation limitations keep you (or others in your household) from doing?

Answer	#	%
Working or seeking employment	5	15.2
Medical/Dental visits	6	18.2
Shopping	8	24.2
Social/Recreational activities	10	30.3
Attending training or school	3	9.1
Other	1	3.0
Total Responses	33	100.0

Question 8 – Are there any reasons why those in your household do not drive or limit the amount of their driving? (adults only)

Answer	#	%
Yes	24	100.0
No	0	0.0
Total Responses	24	100.0

Question 8 (follow-up) – If yes, please explain why (check all that apply)

Answer	#	%
Do not drive in poor weather	4	8.3
Not licensed to drive	10	20.8
Do not drive at night	5	10.4
Disability	12	25.0
Expense of owning and maintaining a vehicle	9	18.8
Do not own a vehicle	8	16.7
Other	0	0.0
Total Responses	48	100.0

Question 9 – Do you or members of your household use any of the following types of transportation? (check all that apply)

Answer	#	%
Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority	19	54.3
Big Rapids Dial-a-Ride (DART)	8	22.9
Taxi	2	5.7
School buses	3	8.6
Other	3	8.6
Total Responses	35	100.0

Question 10 – How often do you or others in your household use these transportation services?

Answer	#	%
A few times per week	19	86.4
A few times per month	2	9.1
A few times per year	1	4.5
Total Responses	22	100.0

Question 11 – If the level of public transportation services was increased would you or members of your household use it more often?

Answer	#	%
Definitely yes	13	54.2
Probably yes	6	25.0
Probably not	3	12.5
Definitely not	0	0.0
Not sure	2	8.3
Total Responses	24	100.0

Question 12 – If the level of public transportation services was increased, where would you or members of your household typically travel? (check all that apply)

Answer	#	%
Trips within Mecosta County	12	35.3
Trips within Osceola County	2	5.9
Trips between Osceola and Mecosta counties	14	41.2
Trips to adjacent counties	2	5.9
Not sure	3	8.8
Other	1	2.9
Total Responses	34	100.0

Question 13 – If you, or other members of your household, use (or would use) public transportation, what days of the week and times of the day would best serve your needs? Please check all that apply.

Time/Day	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Not sure	Total
Morning	6	21	19	20	17	18	9	1	111
%	2.6	9.1	8.3	8.7	7.4	7.8	3.9	0.4	48.3
Afternoon	6	15	13	14	12	14	8	1	83
%	2.6	6.5	5.7	6.1	5.2	6.1	3.5	0.4	36.1
Evening	2	6	6	5	6	5	4	2	36
%	0.9	2.6	2.6	2.2	2.6	2.2	1.7	0.9	15.7
Total	14	42	38	39	35	37	21	4	230
%	6.1	18.3	16.5	17.0	15.2	16.1	9.1	1.7	100.0

Question 14 – How many people live in your household?

Answer	#	%
1 person	3	13.0
2 people	3	13.0
3 people	3	13.0
4 people	3	13.0
5 people	4	17.4
6 people	1	4.3
7 people	1	4.3
8 people	2	8.7
9 people	1	4.3
10 people	0	0.0
More than 10	2	8.7
Total Responses	23	100.0

Median: 3.8 people per household

Question 14 (follow-up) – What are the ages of each?

Answer	#	%
Under 18	6	11.5
18-34	19	36.5
35-50	8	15.4
51-65	16	30.8
Over 65	3	5.8
Total Responses	52	100.0

Median: 35.1 years

Question 15 – How many functional passenger vehicles do you and other members of your household own?

Answer	#	%
0	8	34.8
1	6	26.1
2	6	26.1
3	3	13.0
4	0	0.0
5	0	0.0
Total Responses	23	100.0

Question 16 – How many licensed drivers live in your household?

Answer	#	%
0	7	21.9
1	4	12.5
2	10	31.3
3	1	3.1
4	0	0.0
Total Responses	32	100.0

Question 17 – Where is your household located?

Answer	#	%	Pop.%
NE Osceola	0	0.0	8.1
SE Osceola	2	8.7	11.7
NW Osceola	0	0.0	8.9
SW Osceola	1	4.3	15.1
NE Mecosta	0	0.0	11.1
SE Mecosta	6	26.1	10.8
NW Mecosta	10	43.5	17.2
SW Mecosta	4	17.4	17.0
Total Responses	23	100.0	---

Question 18 – Do you feel mass transit is important enough that Mecosta and Osceola counties should have a special millage in place to support a system?

Answer	#	%
Yes	21	91.3
No	2	8.7
Total Responses	23	100.0

Question 18 (follow-up) – If yes, how much would you be willing to pay per year to support such a system? (Circle highest amount)

Answer	#	%
\$25	6	33.3
\$50	5	27.8
\$100	1	5.6
\$150	5	27.8
\$200	1	5.6
\$250	0	0.0
\$300	0	0.0
Total Responses	18	100.0

Supplemental Survey

This survey was distributed to 30 stakeholders across the two-county area. While only nine surveys were returned, they identify many perceptions that need to be addressed and other issues that will present challenges. The bulleted items represent comments from each of the nine respondents. Each respondent's answers were kept in the same order throughout the numerous questions so that references can be made between questions.

1. How familiar are you with MOTA and its services?
 - Very
 - I am not at all familiar with MOTA.
 - Very
 - I see the buses
 - Quite familiar
 - Familiar but don't use the service.
 - Yes! I have never seen more than 2 people on this large bus when it goes past my house. The people that ride from this area also eat out every morning. Who's paying?
 - Not Very – I rode the CAT bus for many years and it was a great advantage to me in getting to and from work.
 - Very

2. What (in your opinion) are the primary advantages of maintaining a two-county transit authority?
 - Single administration, traveling to doctor appointment in either county (Mecosta/Osceola).
 - Autonomy
 - We do not need a two county transit authority.
 - Very little, Combine management to save dollars.
 - To maintain the transit as it is no advantage. Some major changes need to be made to make MOTA truly available to all of both counties.
 - None
 - None! Unless it is self-supporting.
 - Mass transit is a necessity in this rural area for many people.

- None
3. What (in your opinion) are MOTA's strengths?
- Offer a valuable service for many low income who can't afford their own transportation or for those who are unable to drive.
 - I am sorry to say I don't know.
 - None
 - There is a need in every society to have a public transportation system.
 - One strength is affordable transportation.
 - None
 - It could be useful to those without transportation. But they should pay for this service.
 - Blank
 - Serves schools and Hope Network – but don't believe taxpayers will support millage for this.
4. What (in your opinion) are the primary disadvantages of maintaining a two-county transit authority?
- If dealing with one county could probably focus better on meeting the needs of the people in the county.
 - A possible disadvantage is duplication of services.
 - We do not need this.
 - Cost
 - Cost
 - Cost
 - Cost, too large an area to be useful to all people five days a week.
 - Blank
 - Rural – cost prohibitive
5. What (in your opinion) are MOTA's weaknesses?
- No help to seniors with getting on and off or with bags, wait time too long for return trip.
 - I am sorry to say I do not know
 - We don't have to go to two counties to pick up perhaps one person.
 - I think you've tried it but a schedule from point a to b to c to d and back 2-4 times a day would be better.
 - It was perceived to be a "Meals on Wheels" service only. Its whole image needs to be changed.
 - No area coverage
 - The buses are too large. The thought that tax money is free money. Someone has to pay the bill.
 - Lack of the public's knowledge of MOTA and its services.

- Cannot be door to door – cost – cannot be on demand – cost – cannot serve working people – get to jobs – cost.
6. What can be done to improve transit services in Mecosta and Osceola counties?
- Smaller buses or vans that cover a smaller area so both travel and wait time is shorter. Possibly with more trips into each area.
 - Blank
 - Each county take care of its own needs.
 - With gas prices set up park and ride routes.
 - Make it truly available to all of both counties and make it visible before the election.
 - County-wide daily service.
 - Smaller buses. Commission on Aging does a wonderful job with vans. Bigger is not always better.
 - Blank
 - Too cost prohibitive in rural area
7. Do you feel there would be public support for a transit millage if enhanced services are provided?
- What are the “enhanced” services? Not enough information on “enhanced” services.
 - Blank
 - I hope not
 - Not sure. I would. Everything is so expensive. The worker, property owner, and tax payer bear the burden.
 - Questionable
 - No
 - No! It must be self-supporting.
 - Not unless “someone” does a better job of promotion than you’ve had thus far.
 - No
8. How would you like to see the transit needs of the area’s residents addressed?
- See #6 (small buses) Also fees need to be affordable because people riding on the buses will be low income or on a fixed income.
 - Yes. As gas prices increase and as the population ages transit needs may become more necessary in both counties.
 - Blank
 - Continue service. We need it.
 - Don’t have a good answer.
 - Those that use it pay for it.
 - I pay my way! They should also.
 - I see MOTA needs a lot more PR to let the public know what and when transportation is available. Other countries rely heavily on such services and ours should be able to also.

- Too cost prohibitive to meet needs of people. People rely on friends and neighbors for doctors appointments etc. People can't control when they get sick. Too long to wait for buses.

9. Other Comments:

- I've been told that if a senior has more then one bag of groceries (or other purchases) they have to pay extra to ride. Is this true?
- Blank
- Blank
- In this day and age there is a need for people to get around. Now should some need based people live near the public transit route? Maybe.
- If there are spare buses spread them out through areas where they've no been seen. Put a sign on its side advertising. Park them in one spot for a while. Hand out brochures.
- Enough taxes now, don't need anymore.
- With the price of oil – everyone is making cuts to their budgets. We should not be asked to pick-up the tab for others.
- Blank
- Blank

APPENDIX A

MEETING NOTES

Level of Need Study for Transit Services Committee

April 24, 2006

10:00 a.m.

MOTA Offices

18710 16 Mile Road

Big Rapids, Michigan 49307

1. The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m.
2. The following people attended the meeting
 - John Todd, Mecosta County
 - John Drury, MDOT
 - Roger Faber, Osceola County
 - Ron Schalow, Osceola County
 - Karen Brewster, MOTA
 - John Sundquist, MOTA
 - Andy Brush, MDOT
 - Ray Steinke, Mecosta County
 - Dave Bee, WMRPC
3. Review Draft Survey Tool – The group reviewed the survey tool and made one change related to reporting residence. D. Bee will make changes and format the survey in an appropriate manner prior to the next meeting.
4. Discuss Methods of Distributing Survey – D. Bee stated that he investigated the cost of return postage. It requires a \$160 permit and it costs \$1.04 per unit returned. The group decided to not include return postage. Drop off stations will be established across the two county area to allow those interested in dropping surveys off with convenient locations. D. Bee will also put a press release together to forward to The Pioneer. Drop off sites will also have several copies of the survey for people interested in returning a survey that did not randomly receive a survey.
5. Develop List of People to Mail Supplemental Survey – The Committee submitted a list of names to D. Bee, who will create a more open-ended survey to distribute to 30-40 people/organizations.
6. Set Next Meeting(s) – The next meeting was set for May 15, 2006, at 10:30 a.m. at the MOTA Offices.
7. Other – Not other business
8. Adjourn – The meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

MEETING NOTES

Level of Need Study for Transit Services Committee

May 15, 2006

10:30 a.m.

MOTA Offices

18710 16 Mile Road

Big Rapids, Michigan 49307

1. The meeting was called to order at 10:30 a.m.
2. The following people attended the meeting
 - John Todd, Mecosta County
 - John Drury, MDOT
 - Ron Schallow, Osceola County
 - Karen Brewster, MOTA
 - John Sundquist, MOTA
 - Andy Brush, MDOT
 - Ray Steinke, Mecosta County
 - Dave Bee, WMRPC
 - Gary Schuberg (visitor)
 - Mike Tillman (visitor)
3. Review Meeting Notes of April 24, 2006 – Andy Brush noted one minor change (“No” other business instead of “Not” under item 7)
4. Review Draft Survey Tool – The group reviewed the survey tool and made changes to the closing statement. D. Bee will make changes run copies for distribution. 3,500 copies will be mailed, 250 will go to MOTA for distribution on buses (blue) and an additional 250 will be distributed to pick-up stations (yellow).
5. Review Supplemental Survey – D. Bee reviewed the supplemental survey that will be distributed to key people and organizations. There were no changes.
6. Review Press Release – Andy Brush changed the last paragraph. A comprehensive list of news agencies was discussed.
7. Set Next Meeting – The next meeting was set for June 19, 2006, at 10:30 a.m. at the MOTA Offices.
8. Other – No other business
9. Adjourn – The meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m.

MEETING NOTES

Level of Need Study for Transit Services Committee

June 19, 2006

10:30 a.m.

MOTA Offices

18710 16 Mile Road

Big Rapids, Michigan 49307

10. The meeting was called to order at 10:30 a.m.

11. The following people attended the meeting

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| • John Todd, Mecosta County | • Dave Bee, WMRPC |
| • John Drury, MDOT | • Gary Schuberg, Big Rapids (Visitor) |
| • Ron Schalow, Osceola County | • Tom Lenard (Visitor) |
| • Karen Brewster, MOTA | • Marco Menezes, Osceola County (Visitor) |
| • John Sundquist, MOTA | • Clark Harder, MPTA (Visitor) |
| • Andy Brush, MDOT | • Paul Griffith, Michigan Works (Visitor) |
| • Ray Steinke, Mecosta County | |

12. Review Meeting Notes of May 15 – No changes were noted

13. Update on Survey – D. Bee described how 3,500 surveys had been sent out to households across the two counties (white surveys). Additionally, 250 blue surveys were provided to MOTA for distribution to transit users. D. Bee also mailed 25 yellow surveys to each of the drop off stations with a large postage-paid return envelope. K. Brewer gave D. Bee some completed surveys to tabulate. D. Bee will try to have the results tabulated by the next meeting.

14. Update on Supplemental Survey – D. Bee stated that many supplemental surveys had come in and the overall tone is fairly negative. D. Bee will have a summary of the survey at the next meeting.

15. Update on Press Release – D. Bee described how the press release was faxed to all of the area's newspapers and radio stations. The newspapers published several pieces. Nobody heard anything on any of the radio stations. The Big Rapids paper called D. Bee for additional information.

16. Update on Community Description – D. Bee stated that he has not started this process yet and the group discussed some of the information they would like to see included in the description. D. Bee will have a draft at the next meeting.

17. Set Next Meeting – The next meeting was set for July 17, 2006, at 10:00 a.m. at the MOTA Offices.

18. Other – No other business

19. Adjourn – The meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m.

MEETING NOTES

Level of Need Study for Transit Services Committee

July 17, 2006

10:00 a.m.

MOTA Offices

18710 16 Mile Road

Big Rapids, Michigan 49307

20. The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m.

21. The following people attended the meeting

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| • John Todd, Mecosta County | • Dave Bee, WMRPC |
| • John Drury, MDOT | • Gary Schuberg, Big Rapids |
| • Ron Schalow, Osceola County | • Tom Lenard |
| • Karen Brewster, MOTA | • Marco Menezes, Osceola County |
| • John Sundquist, MOTA | • Clark Harder, MPTA |
| • Andy Brush, MDOT | • Mike Tillman, MOTA |
| • Ray Steinke, Mecosta County | • Roger Faber, Osceola County |
| | • Connie Gibson, Mecosta County |

22. Review Meeting Notes of June 19, 2006 – No changes were noted

23. Update on Survey – D. Bee described how many surveys were returned and went over the tabulated results. The West Michigan Regional Planning Commission finished tabulating the surveys on Friday, but has not written an analysis of the results yet.

24. Update on Supplemental Survey – D. Bee summarized the results of the supplemental survey that was sent to 30 key people in the two-county area.

25. Update on Community Description – D Bee distributed and reviewed a description of the two-county area's demographics including commuting habits by individual community.

26. Discuss Next Steps – D. Bee stated that the next step is to write an analysis of the survey results and compile all of the information into a single report.

27. Set Next Meeting – A meeting was set for August 14, 2006 at 9:00 a.m. to go over the results and for August 21, 2006 to adopt a plan of action.

28. Other – No other business

29. Adjourn – The meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

APPENDIX B

PRESS RELEASE

To: Community News

From: Dave Bee

Date: May 22, 2006

Subject: Mecosta-Osceola Transit Needs Assessment

The Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority (MOTA) is working with the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and the West Michigan Regional Planning Commission (WMRPC) to perform a study titled "Level of Need Study for Transit Services in Mecosta and Osceola Counties."

Part of the study includes a random survey of 3,500 households in Mecosta and Osceola counties (excluding the City of Big Rapids which is served by Big Rapids Dial-a-Ride). Distribution of the survey will occur towards the end of May and surveys should be mailed back to MOTA by July 1, 2006. Survey questions relate to the needs of residents related to transit – such as how people travel for various types of trips, difficulties related to travel, need for transit, and funding. The survey should only take a few minutes to complete. The survey will be tabulated and analyzed by the WMRPC and is funded by the U.S. Federal Transit Administration.

Although this is a random survey of households, MOTA encourages the involvement of all residents. If your household does not receive a survey by mid-June, but would like to participate, you may contact MOTA at (231) 796-4896 or stop in at any of these locations to pick up and complete a survey: MOTA, 18710 16 Mile Road, Big Rapids; Osceola County Clerk's Office; Mecosta County Clerk's Office; City of Evart; Village of Marion; the Barryton Public Library; the Kettunen Center; Mecosta Center on Aging; or the Wheatland Township Public Library. The survey is also available on-line at www.motaonline.net.

APPENDIX C

MECOSTA AND OSCEOLA COUNTIES TRANSIT SURVEY

Dear Resident of Osceola and Mecosta Counties:

The Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority (MOTA) is performing the following survey to better understand the needs of the residents of the two-county area served by MOTA. The intent of the survey is to discover the needs of the area in order to work towards improving transit opportunities in an appropriate and desirable manner. MOTA is your transit system – so it is essential that we understand your needs. Please take a few minutes to complete the following survey.

Thank you for your time.

Karen Brewster, Director, MOTA

1. What method of transportation do you and others in your household normally use for traveling to work or for seeking employment? Please check all that apply.

☐ Personal Vehicle ☐ Car Pool ☐ Transit
☐ Taxi ☐ Bicycle ☐ Walk
☐ A neighbor, relative, or friend drives
☐ Other (specify) _____
☐ No one in this household is employed or seeking employment

What community do you typically travel to for this function? _____

2. What method of transportation do you and others in your household normally use for traveling to school or training? Please check all that apply.

☐ Personal Vehicle ☐ Car Pool ☐ Transit
☐ Taxi ☐ Bicycle ☐ Walk
☐ A neighbor, relative, or friend drives
☐ Other (specify) _____
☐ No one in this household is attending school

What community do you typically travel to for this function? _____

3. What method of transportation do you and others in your household normally use for shopping? Please check all that apply.

☐ Personal Vehicle ☐ Car Pool ☐ Transit
☐ Taxi ☐ Bicycle ☐ Walk
☐ A neighbor, relative, or friend drives
☐ Other (specify) _____

What community do you typically travel to for this function? _____

4. What method of transportation do you and others in your household normally use for medical or dental visits? Please check all that apply.

☐ Personal Vehicle ☐ Car Pool ☐ Transit
☐ Taxi ☐ Bicycle ☐ Walk
☐ A neighbor, relative, or friend drives
☐ Other (specify) _____

What community do you typically travel to for this function? _____

5. What method of transportation do you and others in your household normally use for social or recreational trips? Please check all that apply.

☐ Personal Vehicle ☐ Car Pool ☐ Transit
☐ Taxi ☐ Bicycle ☐ Walk
☐ A neighbor, relative, or friend drives
☐ Other (specify) _____

What community do you typically travel to for this function? _____

6. For each of the following items, during the past 12 months have you or anyone else in your household had to delay or cancel an appointment or errand because you did not have access to transportation?
☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please check all that apply:

☐ Work ☐ Medical/Dental ☐ School
☐ Shopping ☐ Social/Recreation
☐ Other (specify) _____

7. Do you, or others in your household, have problems meeting transportation needs? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, what do your transportation limitations keep you (or others in your household) from doing? (Check all that apply)

☐ Working or seeking employment ☐ Medical/Dental visits
☐ Shopping ☐ Social/Recreation activities
☐ Attending training or school
☐ Other (specify) _____

8. Are there any reasons why those in your household do not drive or limit the amount of their driving? (adults only) ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please explain why (check all that apply)

☐ Do not drive in poor weather ☐ Not licensed to drive
☐ Do not drive at night ☐ Disability
☐ Expense of owning & maintaining a vehicle (including fuel costs)
☐ Do not own a vehicle ☐ Other (specify) _____

9. Do you or members of your household use any of the following types of transportation? (check all that apply)

☐ Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority (MOTA)
☐ Big Rapids Dial a Ride (DART)
☐ Taxi
☐ School Buses
☐ Other (specify) _____

10. How often do you or others in your household use these transportation services?

☐ A few times per week
☐ A few times per month
☐ A few times per year

11. If the level of public transportation services was increased would you or members of your household use it more?

☐ Definitely yes ☐ Probably yes ☐ Probably not ☐ Definitely not ☐ Unsure

12. If the level of public transportation services was increased, where would you or members of your household typically travel? (check all that apply)

☐ Trips within Mecosta County ☐ Trips within Osceola County ☐ Trips between Osceola and Mecosta counties ☐ Trips to adjacent counties ☐ Not sure
☐ Other (specify) _____

13. If you, or other members of your household, use (or would use) public transportation, what days of the week and times of the day would best serve your needs? Please check all that apply.

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Unsure
Morning								
Afternoon								
Evening								

14. How many people live in your household? _____ and what are the ages of each? _____

15. How many functional passenger vehicles do you and other members of your household own? _____

16. How many licensed drivers live in your household? _____

17. Where is your household located?

City of _____
Village of _____
Township of _____

18. Do you feel mass transit is important enough that Mecosta and Osceola counties should have a special millage in-place to support a system? ☐ Yes ☐ No (Your answer is for informational purposes only)

If yes, how much would you be willing to pay per year to support such a system? (Circle highest amount)

\$25 \$50 \$100 \$150 \$200 \$250 \$300

Additional Comments:

Thank you for your assistance.

Please fold and tape survey so that MOTA's address is visible. Please Return Surveys by June 1, 2006. To help contain costs, please attach a stamp to the survey. If you would like to save a stamp you can drop your survey off at one of the following locations: MOTA, 18710 16 Mile Road, Big Rapids; Osceola County Clerk's Office; Mecosta County Clerk's Office; City of Evart; Village of Marion; the Barryton Public Library; or the Wheatland Township Public Library.

APPENDIX D

May 22, 2006

Ms. Dee Barringes
20564 – 1 Mile
Morley, MI 49336

Subject: Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority

Dear Ms. Barringes,

The Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority (MOTA) is working with Mecosta and Osceola counties, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), and the West Michigan Regional Planning Commission (WMRPC) to perform a **Level of Need Study for Transit Service in Mecosta and Osceola Counties**. Your name was provided to the WMRPC by one of the members of the nine-person committee comprised of county and transit officials.

Please take a few minutes to complete the following questions related to transit and needs specific to your organization.

6. How familiar are you with MOTA and its services?
7. What (in your opinion) are the primary advantages of maintaining a two-county transit authority?
8. What (in your opinion) are MOTA's strengths?
9. What (in your opinion) are the primary disadvantages of maintaining a two-county transit authority?
10. What (in your opinion) are MOTA's weaknesses?

May 22, 2006

Mr. James Carey
15460 Jefferson Road
Morley, MI 49336

Subject: Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority

Dear Mr. Carey,

The Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority (MOTA) is working with Mecosta and Osceola counties, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), and the West Michigan Regional Planning Commission (WMRPC) to perform a **Level of Need Study for Transit Service in Mecosta and Osceola Counties**. Your name was provided to the WMRPC by one of the members of the nine-person committee comprised of county and transit officials.

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5. What (in your opinion) are MOTA's weaknesses?

May 22, 2006

Mr. Stan Casey
15220 Jefferson Road
Morley, MI 49336

Subject: Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority

Dear Mr. Casey,

The Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority (MOTA) is working with Mecosta and Osceola counties, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), and the West Michigan Regional Planning Commission (WMRPC) to perform a **Level of Need Study for Transit Service in Mecosta and Osceola Counties**. Your name was provided to the WMRPC by one of the members of the nine-person committee comprised of county and transit officials.

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5. What (in your opinion) are MOTA's weaknesses?

May 22, 2006

Mr. Richard Garbow
13834 – 5 Mile Road
Morley, MI 49336

Subject: Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority

Dear Mr. Garbow,

The Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority (MOTA) is working with Mecosta and Osceola counties, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), and the West Michigan Regional Planning Commission (WMRPC) to perform a **Level of Need Study for Transit Service in Mecosta and Osceola Counties**. Your name was provided to the WMRPC by one of the members of the nine-person committee comprised of county and transit officials.

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5. What (in your opinion) are MOTA's weaknesses?

May 22, 2006

Ms. Shirley Morse
2356 Brady Lake Drive
Morley, MI 49336

Subject: Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority

Dear Ms. Morse,

The Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority (MOTA) is working with Mecosta and Osceola counties, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), and the West Michigan Regional Planning Commission (WMRPC) to perform a **Level of Need Study for Transit Service in Mecosta and Osceola Counties**. Your name was provided to the WMRPC by one of the members of the nine-person committee comprised of county and transit officials.

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5. What (in your opinion) are MOTA's weaknesses?

May 22, 2006

Mr. Gary Todd
21739 – 230th Avenue
Paris, MI 49307

Subject: Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority

Dear Mr. Todd,

The Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority (MOTA) is working with Mecosta and Osceola counties, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), and the West Michigan Regional Planning Commission (WMRPC) to perform a **Level of Need Study for Transit Service in Mecosta and Osceola Counties**. Your name was provided to the WMRPC by one of the members of the nine-person committee comprised of county and transit officials.

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5. What (in your opinion) are MOTA's weaknesses?

May 22, 2006

Mr. Carl VanAlstine
21980 – 150th Avenue
Big Rapids, MI 49307

Subject: Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority

Dear Mr. VanAlstine,

The Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority (MOTA) is working with Mecosta and Osceola counties, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), and the West Michigan Regional Planning Commission (WMRPC) to perform a **Level of Need Study for Transit Service in Mecosta and Osceola Counties**. Your name was provided to the WMRPC by one of the members of the nine-person committee comprised of county and transit officials.

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5. What (in your opinion) are MOTA's weaknesses?

May 22, 2006

Ms. Betty Peterson
21798 – 160th Avenue
Big Rapids, MI 49307

Subject: Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority

Dear Ms. Peterson,

The Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority (MOTA) is working with Mecosta and Osceola counties, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), and the West Michigan Regional Planning Commission (WMRPC) to perform a **Level of Need Study for Transit Service in Mecosta and Osceola Counties**. Your name was provided to the WMRPC by one of the members of the nine-person committee comprised of county and transit officials.

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5. What (in your opinion) are MOTA's weaknesses?

May 22, 2006

Ms. Liz Oleson
810 Olaf
Big Rapids, MI 49307

Subject: Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority

Dear Ms. Oleson,

The Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority (MOTA) is working with Mecosta and Osceola counties, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), and the West Michigan Regional Planning Commission (WMRPC) to perform a **Level of Need Study for Transit Service in Mecosta and Osceola Counties**. Your name was provided to the WMRPC by one of the members of the nine-person committee comprised of county and transit officials.

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5. What (in your opinion) are MOTA's weaknesses?

May 22, 2006

Mr. Norm Turner
510 Winter
Big Rapids, MI 49307

Subject: Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority

Dear Mr. Turner,

The Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority (MOTA) is working with Mecosta and Osceola counties, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), and the West Michigan Regional Planning Commission (WMRPC) to perform a **Level of Need Study for Transit Service in Mecosta and Osceola Counties**. Your name was provided to the WMRPC by one of the members of the nine-person committee comprised of county and transit officials.

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5. What (in your opinion) are MOTA's weaknesses?

May 22, 2006

Mr. Mark Brock
20947 – 10 Mile Road
Reed City, MI 49677

Subject: Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority

Dear Mr. Brock,

The Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority (MOTA) is working with Mecosta and Osceola counties, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), and the West Michigan Regional Planning Commission (WMRPC) to perform a **Level of Need Study for Transit Service in Mecosta and Osceola Counties**. Your name was provided to the WMRPC by one of the members of the nine-person committee comprised of county and transit officials.

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5. What (in your opinion) are MOTA's weaknesses?

May 22, 2006

Mr. Elmo Hoaglund
19020 – 30th Avenue
Tustin, MI 49688

Subject: Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority

Dear Mr. Hoaglund,

The Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority (MOTA) is working with Mecosta and Osceola counties, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), and the West Michigan Regional Planning Commission (WMRPC) to perform a **Level of Need Study for Transit Service in Mecosta and Osceola Counties**. Your name was provided to the WMRPC by one of the members of the nine-person committee comprised of county and transit officials.

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May 22, 2006

Ms. Gloria Eisenga

6986 – 20 Mile Road
Marion, MI 49665

Subject: Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority

Dear Ms. Eisenga,

The Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority (MOTA) is working with Mecosta and Osceola counties, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), and the West Michigan Regional Planning Commission (WMRPC) to perform a **Level of Need Study for Transit Service in Mecosta and Osceola Counties**. Your name was provided to the WMRPC by one of the members of the nine-person committee comprised of county and transit officials.

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May 22, 2006

Mr. David Brooks
15450 Craft Road
Hersey, MI 49639

Subject: Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority

Dear Mr. Brooks,

The Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority (MOTA) is working with Mecosta and Osceola counties, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), and the West Michigan Regional Planning Commission (WMRPC) to perform a **Level of Need Study for Transit Service in Mecosta and Osceola Counties**.

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May 22, 2006

Mr. Larry Emig
436 W. Osceola Avenue
Reed City, MI 49677

Subject: Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority

Dear Mr. Emig,

The Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority (MOTA) is working with Mecosta and Osceola counties, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), and the West Michigan Regional Planning Commission (WMRPC) to perform a **Level of Need Study for Transit Service in Mecosta and Osceola Counties**. Your name was provided to the WMRPC by one of the members of the nine-person committee comprised of county and transit officials.

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May 22, 2006

Mr. Bruce Robinson
613 N. Oak Street
Ewart, MI 49631

Subject: Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority

Dear Mr. Robinson,

The Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority (MOTA) is working with Mecosta and Osceola counties, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), and the West Michigan Regional Planning Commission (WMRPC) to perform a **Level of Need Study for Transit Service in Mecosta and Osceola Counties**. Your name was provided to the WMRPC by one of the members of the nine-person committee comprised of county and transit officials.

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May 22, 2006

Mr. Robert Foster
316 West 3rd Street
Evart, MI 49631

Subject: Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority

Dear Mr. Foster,

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May 22, 2006

Ms. Jean Duey
535 N. Main Street
Ewart, MI 49631

Subject: Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority

Dear Ms. Duey,

The Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority (MOTA) is working with Mecosta and Osceola counties, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), and the West Michigan Regional Planning Commission (WMRPC) to perform a **Level of Need Study for Transit Service in Mecosta and Osceola Counties**. Your name was provided to the WMRPC by one of the members of the nine-person committee comprised of county and transit officials.

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May 22, 2006

Mr. James Whitten
721 N. Main Street
Ewart, MI 49631

Subject: Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority

Dear Mr. Whitten,

The Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority (MOTA) is working with Mecosta and Osceola counties, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), and the West Michigan Regional Planning Commission (WMRPC) to perform a **Level of Need Study for Transit Service in Mecosta and Osceola Counties**. Your name was provided to the WMRPC by one of the members of the nine-person committee comprised of county and transit officials.

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May 22, 2006

Ms. Ann Pattee
807 N. Pine Street
Ewart, MI 49631

Subject: Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority

Dear Ms. Pattee,

The Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority (MOTA) is working with Mecosta and Osceola counties, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), and the West Michigan Regional Planning Commission (WMRPC) to perform a **Level of Need Study for Transit Service in Mecosta and Osceola Counties**. Your name was provided to the WMRPC by one of the members of the nine-person committee comprised of county and transit officials.

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May 22, 2006

Mr. Jim Becker
11194 Riverside Drive
Big Rapids, MI 49307

Subject: Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority

Dear Mr. Becker,

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May 22, 2006

Mr. Jim White
21235 – 1 Mile Road
Reed City, MI 49677

Subject: Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority

Dear Mr. White,

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May 22, 2006

Mr. Dennis Gaymer
606 Bjornson
Big Rapids, MI 49307

Subject: Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority

Dear Mr. Gaymer,

The Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority (MOTA) is working with Mecosta and Osceola counties, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), and the West Michigan Regional Planning Commission (WMRPC) to perform a **Level of Need Study for Transit Service in Mecosta and Osceola Counties**. Your name was provided to the WMRPC by one of the members of the nine-person committee comprised of county and transit officials.

Please take a few minutes to complete the following questions related to transit and needs specific to your organization.

1. How familiar are you with MOTA and its services?
2. What (in your opinion) are the primary advantages of maintaining a two-county transit authority?
3. What (in your opinion) are MOTA's strengths?
4. What (in your opinion) are the primary disadvantages of maintaining a two-county transit authority?
5. What (in your opinion) are MOTA's weaknesses?

May 22, 2006

Mr. Alan Fountain
420 S. Cass
Mecosta, MI 49332

Subject: Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority

Dear Mr. Fountain,

The Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority (MOTA) is working with Mecosta and Osceola counties, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), and the West Michigan Regional Planning Commission (WMRPC) to perform a **Level of Need Study for Transit Service in Mecosta and Osceola Counties**. Your name was provided to the WMRPC by one of the members of the nine-person committee comprised of county and transit officials.

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May 22, 2006

Ms. Julaine Kern
21983 – 30th Avenue
Barryton, MI 49305

Subject: Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority

Dear Ms. Kern,

The Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority (MOTA) is working with Mecosta and Osceola counties, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), and the West Michigan Regional Planning Commission (WMRPC) to perform a **Level of Need Study for Transit Service in Mecosta and Osceola Counties**. Your name was provided to the WMRPC by one of the members of the nine-person committee comprised of county and transit officials.

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May 22, 2006

Ms. Karen Stillwell
Commission on Aging and Senior Center
12954 – 80th Avenue
Mecosta, MI 49332

Subject: Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority

Dear Ms. Stillwell,

The Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority (MOTA) is working with Mecosta and Osceola counties, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), and the West Michigan Regional Planning Commission (WMRPC) to perform a **Level of Need Study for Transit Service in Mecosta and Osceola Counties**. Your name was provided to the WMRPC by one of the members of the nine-person committee comprised of county and transit officials.

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May 22, 2006

Ms. Kay Crew
Mecosta County General Hospital
405 Winter Avenue
Big Rapids, MI 49307

Subject: Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority

Dear Ms. Crew,

The Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority (MOTA) is working with Mecosta and Osceola counties, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), and the West Michigan Regional Planning Commission (WMRPC) to perform a **Level of Need Study for Transit Service in Mecosta and Osceola Counties**. Your name was provided to the WMRPC by one of the members of the nine-person committee comprised of county and transit officials.

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May 22, 2006

Mr. John Calabrese
Mecosta Osceola Human Resource Association
P.O. Box 39
Big Rapids, MI 49307

Subject: Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority

Dear Mr. Calabrese,

The Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority (MOTA) is working with Mecosta and Osceola counties, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), and the West Michigan Regional Planning Commission (WMRPC) to perform a **Level of Need Study for Transit Service in Mecosta and Osceola Counties**. Your name was provided to the WMRPC by one of the members of the nine-person committee comprised of county and transit officials.

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May 22, 2006

Mr. Bruce Covey
Mid-Michigan Community Action Agency
405 S. Third Avenue
Big Rapids, MI 49307

Subject: Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority

Dear Mr. Covey,

The Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority (MOTA) is working with Mecosta and Osceola counties, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), and the West Michigan Regional Planning Commission (WMRPC) to perform a **Level of Need Study for Transit Service in Mecosta and Osceola Counties**. Your name was provided to the WMRPC by one of the members of the nine-person committee comprised of county and transit officials.

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May 22, 2006

Ms. Lorraine McCall
Osceola Commission on Aging

732 West U.S. 10
P.O. Box 594
Evart, MI 49631

Subject: Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority

Dear Ms. McCall,

The Mecosta-Osceola Transit Authority (MOTA) is working with Mecosta and Osceola counties, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), and the West Michigan Regional Planning Commission (WMRPC) to perform a **Level of Need Study for Transit Service in Mecosta and Osceola Counties**. Your name was provided to the WMRPC by one of the members of the nine-person committee comprised of county and transit officials.

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